

**CARJACKING** has become one of the most prevalent crimes in many parts of the world. Most carjackings occur for the sole purpose of taking the car; it is a crime without a political agenda and does not specifically target Americans.

You can protect yourself by becoming familiar with the methods, ruses, and locations commonly used by carjackers.

## **AVOIDANCE**

The first step to avoiding an attack is to stay alert at all times and be aware of your environment. The most likely places for a carjacking are:

- High crime areas
- Lesser traveled roads (rural areas)
- Intersections where you must stop
- Isolated areas in parking lots
- Residential driveways and gates
- Traffic jams or congested areas

Learn to avoid these areas and situations if possible. If not, take steps to prevent an attack.

In traffic, look around for possible avenues of escape. Keep some distance between you and the vehicle in front so you can maneuver easily if necessary – about one-half of your vehicle’s length. (You should always be able to see the rear tires of the vehicle in front of you.)

When stopped, use your rear and side view mirrors to stay aware of your surroundings.

Also keep your doors locked and windows up. This increases your safety and makes it more difficult for an attacker to surprise you.

Accidents are one ruse used by attackers to control a victim. Following are common attack plans:

**The Bump** – The attacker bumps the victim’s vehicle from behind. The victim gets out to assess the damage and exchange information. The victim’s vehicle is taken.

**Good Samaritan** – The attacker(s) stage what appears to be an accident. They may simulate an injury. The victim stops to assist, and the vehicle is taken.

**The Ruse** – The vehicle behind the victim flashes its lights or the driver waves to get the victim’s attention. The attacker tries to indicate that there is a problem with the victim’s car. The victim pulls over and the vehicle is taken.

**The Trap** – Carjackers use surveillance to follow the victim home. When the victim pulls into his or her driveway waiting for the gate to open, the attacker pulls up behind and blocks the victim’s car.

If you are bumped from behind or if someone tries to alert you to a problem with your vehicle, pull over only when you reach a safe public place.

If you are driving into a gated community, call ahead to have the gate opened. Otherwise wait on the street until the gate is open before turning in and possibly getting trapped.

Think before stopping to assist in an accident. It may be safer to call and report the location, number of cars involved, and any injuries you observed.

You can avoid becoming a victim. Ruses and methods, as well as the types of cars most often targeted, differ from country to country. Talk with the regional security officer (RSO) at your post about local scams and accident procedures.

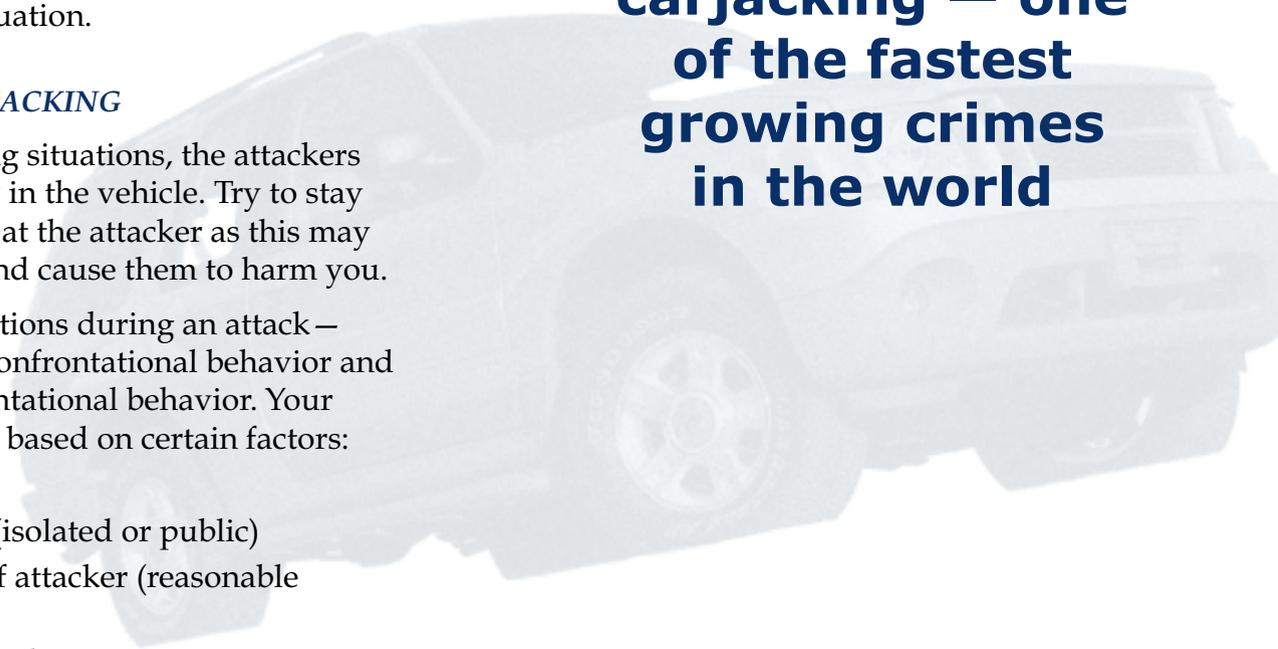
In all cases keep your cell phone or radio with you and immediately alert someone regarding your situation.

## **DURING A CARJACKING**

In most carjacking situations, the attackers are interested only in the vehicle. Try to stay calm. Do not stare at the attacker as this may seem aggressive and cause them to harm you.

There are two options during an attack – nonresistive, nonconfrontational behavior and resistive or confrontational behavior. Your reaction should be based on certain factors:

- Type of attack
- Environment (isolated or public)
- Mental state of attacker (reasonable or nervous)
- Number of attackers
- Weapons
- Whether children are present



**You can protect yourself against carjacking – one of the fastest growing crimes in the world**

In the nonconfrontational situation, you would:

- give up the vehicle freely.
- listen carefully to all directions.
- make no quick or sudden movements that the attacker could construe as a counter attack.
- always keeps your hands in plain view. Tell the attacker of every move in advance.
- make the attacker aware if children are present. The attacker may be focused only on the driver and not know children are in the car.

In a resistive or confrontational response, you would make a decision to escape or attack the carjacker. Before doing so, consider:

- the mental state of the attacker.
- possible avenues of escape.
- the number of attackers; there is usually more than one.
- the use of weapons. (Weapons are used in the majority of carjacking situations.)

*In most instances, it is probably safest to give up your vehicle.*

## **AFTER THE ATTACK**

### **SAFETY**

Always carry a cell phone or radio on your person.

If you are in a populated area, immediately go to a safe place. After an attack or an attempted

attack, you might not be focused on your safety. Get to a safe place before contacting someone to report the incident.

### **REPORTING THE CRIME**

Describe the event. What time of day did it occur? Where did it happen? How did it happen? Who was involved?

Describe the attacker(s). Without staring, try to note height, weight, scars or other marks, hair and eye color, the presence of facial hair, build (slender, large), and complexion (dark, fair).

Describe the attacker's vehicle. If possible get the vehicle license number, color, make, model, and year, as well as any marks (scratches, dents, damage) and personal decorations (stickers, colored wheels).

The golden rule for descriptions is to give only that information you absolutely remember. If you are not sure, *don't guess!*

### **CONCLUSION**

Avoidance is the best way to prevent an attack. Use your judgment to evaluate the situation and possible reactions. Know safe areas to go to in an emergency. Always carry your cell phone or radio.

Nonconfrontation is often the best response. The objective is not to thwart the criminal but to survive!



United States Department of State  
Bureau of Diplomatic Security

# **CARJACKING**

## **DON'T BE A VICTIM**